Property Of
Sierra Historic Sites Assoc.
Library

e.1

THE MADERA COUNTY HISTORIAN

MADERA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY QUARTERLY

Volume 6 - Number 1 January, 1966

INTRODUCTION

The Madera County Historian for the first quarter of 1966 will present the life stories of two of Madera's earliest settlers, two people who gave much of their time and thought to making Madera a good place to live.

The Editors plan to present more stories during 1966 related to Madera County's early pioneers.

It is impossible to relate all the material available on the Mace family in this one issue. We hope to create interest, that you might desire to read more from all the records available.

The Madera County Historical Society has many documents, diaries, papers, letters, newspaper items, photographs, clothing and other relics belonging to and about the Mace family.

We have several typewritten stories, plus diaries from which we secured the information contained in this issue of the Historian. Mrs. Mace's story is taken from material she wrote and from the Madera Daily Tribune, July 1916.

(The Madera County Historian for July 1961 contains a story related to the Mace family. Also, we ask you to refer to the Historian for July 1964 for further facts on this family. This material was the research of Nathan Sweet.)

RUSSEL PERRY MACE

Russel Perry Mace was born in Boston, Massachusetts, May 14, 1820. His father, Eliphatet Mace, was a manufacturer of planes and carpenter's tools, and having a large family and a small income, Russel was adopted at an early age by his uncle, Russel Perry, then living at Putney, Vermont. Young Russel was not interested in school and the country life seemed to irritate him. Anticipating the delights of a sea life, though still but a boy, he went to Boston. He shipped as a cabin boy aboard a coaster bound for New Orleans. The life was not as he had pictured in his dreams and one trip was quite sufficient. At New Orleans he left the ship and led a rambling life. He spent one season with a French trader in visiting the Comanche country and trading with the Indians. He then went to Independence, Missouri, and joined the trading train of the American Fur Company enroute for Bent's Fort on the Arkansas River. The train was loaded with blankets, shot guns, blue and red cloth, and a general stock of Indian goods to trade for Otter and beaver skins and hides. The company was represented by the four Bent brothers and Mr. St. Vrain.

At Bent's Fort more adventure was in store for young Russel. It was desired to send important messages to Charles Bent then at Taos, a distance of 180 miles. The trail led through a country infested by the Ute Indians then very hostile to the whites. Robert Fisher, a noted scout and trapper - the man who raised Kit Carson - volunteered to go but desired a companion. Young Mace, seeking adventure, though warned of the dangers of the journey, agreed to accompany him. The trip took three days and but for the experience of Bob Fisher, they would surely have been

killed. They followed the Indian trail and lay concealed in canyons while the Indians passed but a few feet away. They journeyed mainly by night and arrived safely at Taos amidst great rejoicing. The important mission had been completed. They returned to Bent's Fort accompanied by a strong guard of trappers and hunters. Russel Mace was an employee of Charles Bent for six years and was considered one of his most trusty scouts and express riders. He carried express from Bent's Fort to Fort George, another very dangerous trail, usually traveling with a mule. He trusted to familiarity with the country and strategy rather than speed to escape the Indians. He was armed with his trusty rifle, two belt pistols, and two holster pistols. On one of his rides he kept five Indians at bay. At another time, disguised as a Mexican, he rode through an Indian village where detection would have meant certain death.

For two years in connection with Kit Carson, the noted scout, they hunted buffalo for the fur company. The company employed four hundred men and a great amount of meat was needed for food. Mace chased thousands of buffalo over the site now occupied by Denver, Colorado, and he was at Pueblo, Colorado, when the first adobe was named for a trading post. Buffalo meat was the staple food and they had little other meat, and rarely had bread or vegetables.

In 1844 when but 23 years of age, he returned to New Orleans and was a clerk in the wine rooms of Mr. Warfield. At the opening of the Mexican war he was among the first to volunteer and was severely wounded while serving three months under General Gaines. During this time the Secretary of War had made a requisition upon Louisiana for a regiment, and by leave Mr. Mace returned to New Orleans. He recruited the first company under the requisition. As captain of Company A he served until the treaty was made with Mexico in 1848. About that time Governor Barbechanoa of Yucatan applied for troops to quell the Indian uprising and Captain Mace, with a company of men went to Yucatan and drove the Indians from many strongholds which they had occupied for years.

Captain Mace married Elizabeth Ann Evans, widow of First Lieutenant Evans of his Company. Lieutenant Evans died from yellow fever in Tampico.

Then gold was discovered in California. Mace started at once to journey to California. His wife, Elizabeth Mace and her seven year old son, Charles Evans (whose life story is also very interesting), accompanied him.

A fine portrait of Elizabeth Mace, done in New Orleans, is in the possession of Mrs. Willard Pitman of Madera. In an issue of the Old Timer's Edition of the Madera News Tribune, it states: "The oldest monument standing today in Arbor Vitae Cemetery is that of Elizabeth A. Mace. Mrs. Mace died at Fine Gold, Fresno County, August 12, 1864."

Captain and Mrs. Mace arrived in San Francisco via Panama in August 1849. From San Francisco they went to "Happy Valley" for a few weeks and then to Rose's bar on the Yuba River where he engaged in mining. He followed this occupation in various parts of the state for a period of twenty years. (Nathan Sweet of Oakhurst has established the fact that Capt. Mace was working on the Merced River in 1852.)

On the San Joaquin above Millerton, Mace and several others spent three years in building a race to turn the river, after which they struck it rich for a short time, making $900 the first day and for several days $1000 per day but the bed soon played out. Captain Mace also discovered a rich quartz mine at Fine Gold but during his absence it was mismanaged and destroyed. He then turned to the ranch and stock interests but the "no fence" law forced him to dispose of his stock.

Captain Mace married Mrs. Jennie Cunningham Gilmore on December 25, 1866. (Marriage certificate is part of Madera County Historical Society collection.)

Two years before the City of Madera was established, 1874, Captain Mace and the second Mrs. Mace opened a hotel at Borden on the Central Pacific railroad line. He was the first to buy lots in Madera and in 1877 he built a two story wooden hotel which later burned. The present Yosemite Hotel was built to replace this one in 1886. (This building today is occupied by McMahan's Furniture with rooms still available for rent on the second floor.)

Captain Mace built the hotel because he anticipated Madera would become the main Yosemite Terminus of the Southern Pacific Railroad. A member of the Madera County Historical Society has a hotel register showing last date in Borden as Dec. 24, 1876, and the next day it is headed Madera, Dec. 25, 1876.

Captain Mace was an avid horseman and rode daily. The Captain weighed 350 pounds and had his very special saddle which is now in the Madera County Historical Society Collection.

Captain Mace was a member of Madera Lodge No. 28 F. and A. M. and Trigo Chapter and Royal Arch Masons. He was also a member of the California Pioneers and the Veterans of the Mexican War. He served three terms in the State Legislature of this State under Governors Law, Haight, and Irwin in the years 1865, 1868 and 1877. He served with distinction, having held the chairmanship of some of the most important committees during his term of office.

Captain Mace was a great man as is evidenced by the stories printed in the Madera Tribune after his death.

Quoting from one tribute from the Madera Tribune April 26, 1894:

"By the death of Captain R. P. Mace California loses one of her noblest and most highly respected citizens, both in public and private life. The San Joaquin Valley, and the counties of Madera and Fresno, one of their greatest benefactors, Democracy one of its most ardent supporters and leaders, true to his convictions, never failing; the nation one of its bravest soldiers in time of war and one of its most peacable citizens in time of peace; the bereaved family a kind companion and father. But life's work with this philanthropist, soldier, statesman and honored citizen was done and the glimmering life lamp went quietly out in the midst of sweet repose, and the soul has gone to that final rest it so richly deserves."

Captain Mace died April 24, 1894, leaving his wife Jennie and four children, William J., Mary Frances, Russel, and Inez. Captain Mace is buried in the Arbor Vitae Cemetery in Madera.

MRS. JENNIE C. MACE

Mrs. Jennie Cunningham Gilmore Mace was born in County Intrim, Ireland, August 11, 1837. When she was six weeks old, the family went to Indiana. Her parents were Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Cunningham. She had four brothers, Thomas, John, Andrew and Sam and one sister, Margaret.

In May 1855 Miss Cunningham married John W. Gilmore in Lawrenceburg, Indiana. John Gilmore was also born in Ireland. Very shortly after the wedding the young couple came to California, the journey being their honeymoon trip.

From here on we will read from Mrs. Mace's paper presented in 1914 to the Literary Club of Madera:

"With great expectations of soon making a fortune and returning I left my people with a heart full of faith in the future. We went by railroad to New York and from there on the steamer John L. Stevens to Aspinwall, crossed the Isthmus by train to Panama, from there transferred in a skiff to the steamer anchored five miles out in the ocean, arrived in San Francisco on June 17th, a month on the water.

San Francisco had just been laid in ashes so it was mostly a city of tents. We went to Stockton by boat and from there the journey was continued in what they called a prairie schooner.

We were three weeks making the trip from Stockton to the mines at Fine Gold. The Gulch was a lively camp. Tents dotted the banks, mostly Chinese.

Nothing but placer mining was operated in California in the early days. The mining excitement was at its height in the early fifties. Coarse Gold was a prominent mining camp in 1851.

Our first house, when completed, was of pickets with a canvas roof and adobe floor. The pickets were split out of trees and for better defense we had portholes so as to operate fire arms in case of necessity. (We lived under a tree until our house was completed.)

"The Indians were very strong in numbers, as many as five hundred passing in one band at one time. My experiences were often thrilling, for it was frequently necessary to be left alone for days and longer. An Indian's yell or war whoop would make 'my blood run cold.' This occurred some times when they had too much fire water. On one occasion an Indian Chief who had gotten too much came on the place and wanted to come into the house, but with a gun poked through one of the holes I persuaded him to leave. The wild animals were plentiful, the cry and howl of a wild cat or panther was anything but pleasant music.

My neighbors were few and far apart. In my first two years I saw but one white woman, Mrs. Lewis, mother of Mrs. Joe Burns of Sanger. You can imagine the pleasure it gave me to be able to talk to one of my own.

Gold dust was the money medium and nothing looks prettier or richer than grains of gold. We had a store and often the day's receipts would be a thousand dollars, using gold scale weights to determine the amount.

The county at that time was Mariposa and comprised Merced, Mono, Mariposa and Fresno. The county seat was Mariposa located at one end of the county. It worked a hardship on many in having to travel so far to transact business. In 1856 the legislature was petitioned for a division to form the new county of Fresno, the county seat to be at Millerton. For the purpose of organizing, seven commissioners were appointed, namely: Chas. A. Hart, Ira McCray, James Cruikshank, H. M. Lewis, H. O. Carroll, J. W. Gilmore and O. M. Brown. I give these names as several have sons and daughters in Fresno and Madera counties at the present time. The county was formally organized in April 1856. Millerton was chosen the county seat as it was most centrally located. It was a town or camp from which supplies were sent out into the different mining camps. It was located on the banks of the San Joaquin River at the edge of the foothills and on the south side of the river, still in Fresno County.

There was no civilization in this valley at that time, herds of wild horses and antelope and elk held dominion. The Indians made trips at certain times of the year to hunt and secure different kinds of food, berries and grasses and fishing.

In 1851 the government established a fort about a mile above Millerton, named Fort Barbour, afterward changed to Fort Miller, after Capt. Miller. Millerton at that time was called Rootville, but changed to Millerton.

This record is found in Fresno county history. The Indians were in a threatening attitude killing off white people very frequently, hence the need of the fort and troops. Treaties of peace were signed with the chiefs of the many tribes which numbered thousands, the troubles quieted and by 1856 there was no need of troops.

After we came there were two miners and three teamsters murdered not far from where we lived. Many crimes are recounted, and it was long before they felt reconciled to the settling of the white man.

The government had an Indian reservation on the Fresno River about twelve miles from here. Major M. B. Lewis was in charge and John L. Hunt, Deputy Agent. Many of our townspeople knew Mr. Hunt as he spent his last years here.

In 1851 Major Savage organized a volunteer company in Mariposa and later built a fort on the Fresno River, called Fort Bishop. These volunteers were sent to different points to quiet trouble and rebellion.

At a point on the San Joaquin about twenty miles up the river from Millerton, and known in those days as Clark's bar, a party of miners associated themselves together to turn the river out of its natural channel. This project had been actuated on the strength of some rich prospects, getting out of one pan of dirt as much as a hundred dollars. Of the number whom I can name were James McCardle, Scott Ashman, Charlie Duke, Farnum, the two Hatch brothers, Ad Bohell, Capt. Mace and Wm. Cunningham. They worked eight years. Much of the work was through solid granite with little machinery of a work saving nature. In the winter when the river was high they placer mined to keep up

living expenses. Their reward for the years of toil was only pocket deposits and not the mint they expected. Such was often the quenched hopes of the enthusiastic seeker of gold.

The U. S. mail was first carried by horseback, called the 'pony express' from Hornitos via Millerton to Visalia, by our home at the time, now the John O'Neal place. When I first came to the state we got our mail from Stockton, brought to us by the teamsters when hauling supplies.

Mariposa was our postoffice later. Stages followed the pony express and operated until the railroad was built through the valley in the early seventies. The stage road was along the foothills, the large rivers were made passable with ferry boats, but smaller ones like the Fresno and Chowchilla had to be forded making the trip often a perilous one during the winter.

The early pioneers and miners were known to be men of honest, generous principles. When it happened that a renegade came into the community, committing theft or other deeds, there was a necktie party held. Not far from where we lived there were two or three cases where men of this character were found hanging to a tree, which was convincing enough to disband the outlawing element. One great problem was robbing Chinese stores.

In those early days people had the spirit of pleasure the same as today and would often travel seventy-five or a hundred miles to a dance on horseback. When George Sharpton and Charlie Converse built their saw mill in Crane Valley (now Bass Lake) in 1860 they gave a ball. Many attended, making a two day trip for some. The dancing was not like today, but a real, live ho-down lasting all night and often part of the day.

While the pioneers did not have the opportunity of religious services, their early training was deep rooted and when they buried a friend the funeral services were read out of a testament or a chapter out of the Bible as some good mother had provided her son with one upon leaving home. I was there eight years before having an opportunity of attending services.

Mrs. Hoxie and myself organized the first Sunday school in the guard house at the fort. This was in 1860."

Mr. and Mrs. John W. Gilmore's last home was on the O'Neal place, known first as the Gilmore place, later the Gilmore Mace Place. Today it is called O'Neals, the home and land having been purchased from Captain and Mrs. Mace in 1878 by Charles O'Neal. Mrs. Mace lived there for 19 years, first as Mrs. John Gilmore, and then as the wife of Captain Mace after their marriage on December 25, 1866.

The first wife of Captain Mace died August 12, 1864. John Gilmore passed away about the same time.

In 1874 Captain and Mrs. Mace moved to Borden which was at that time the metropolis of that section of the valley. They operated a hotel there for two years, then they moved to Madera where they erected and conducted Madera's first hotel, The Yosemite, originally called Mace's Hotel.

Mrs. Mace took a very active part in the community and town of Madera.

Mrs. Mace was the first Worthy Matron of Chapter 92 O. E. S.

She joined the Methodist Church in Millerton in 1869, she helped organize the Methodist Church in Madera in 1877 and was always an active participant.

She was an honorary member of the Madera Women's Improvement Club. She was one of the founders of the Madera Cemetery Association.

Mrs. Mace was one of the earliest pioneers of this area, having lived here 61 years at the time of her death in 1916.

The Madera Daily Tribune accorded this tribute to Mrs. Mace upon her death on July 22, 1916:

"To Madera Mrs. Mace was always loyal. It was home with all that that represents. Here the best years of her life were spent. Here she raised her family, and it was here that she shared in the joys and sorrows of her friends. Always ready to encourage and assist by kindly word and deed those in adversity, the sunset of her life was rewarded

by the love of a circle of friends than whom few number more.

Her going has caused general sadness that she could not longer remain, but there is the comforting thought that the closing of the earthly chapter is of a record of a long, kindly, well-spent Christian life."

So that our readers can better understand this interesting couple, we will list the family and their immediate descendants:

Capt. Russel Perry Mace - First wife, Elizabeth Ann Evans, a widow with one son, Charles Evans who died in 1889.

Mrs. John Gilmore (nee Jennie Cunningham) - Daughter Matilda, born 1857, died 1944 - Two step-sons, John and Will Gilmore.

Capt. R. P. Mace and Jennie Gilmore were married in 1866.
Children:
William Mace - Born 1867 - Died 1908
Mary Frances Mace - Born 1869 - Died 1945
Russel H. Mace - Born 1871 - Died 1935
Inez M. Mace - Born 1875 - Died 1962

THE MACE HOTEL

Mace's Hotel, later known as the Yosemite Hotel, was erected in 1876. The structure was a wooden, two story building.

Captain Mace managed a hotel at Borden for two years closing the books on December 24, 1876, and serving the first meal in the new Madera structure on Christmas Day.

The wooden building was destroyed in 1886.

A brick building was started before the ashes had barely cooled from the fire. This brick building is still standing today, although altered to meet present day needs.

Thomas Ripperdan managed this hotel for many years.

The Madera County Historical Society has several of the hotel's early registers, showing names of many notables who stopped at the hotel, among them President Ulysses Grant and President Rutherford B. Hayes.

In the early days the trains stopped in Madera so that the passengers might secure meals at the hotel.

Stages going to Yosemite started out from the hotel.

The Mace Hotel, Madera's first hotel, built in 1876.

Captain and Mrs. Mace's first home in O'Neals. Built in 1858. (The smaller building in background) O'Neal home in the foreground.

The Mace family. Seated from left to right: Capt. Mace, Mary Frances, Mrs. Mace, Inez. Standing: William, Matilda Gilmore Brown, and Russel.

PAST PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

As outgoing President of the Madera County Historical Society, I wish to express my sincere appreciation to all the members for their splendid support and cooperation.

The four years I have served have been most rewarding to me in many ways; getting to know so many of you, sharing the excitement and thrill of finding historical data and relics of the past, helping to preserve our County history through storing and cataloging, ever hopeful that some day we may be able to have a museum where we may display these items to all interested, young and old.

One of the greatest privileges was working with the high school students the last three years. Their sincere interest in Madera County's history is something very special.

Again I say thank you and urge you to continue to help the Society grow.

My best wishes to Mr. Alfred Harriman, our new President.

Maud Lindemann

* * * * * * *

OFFICERS FOR 1966

At the annual meeting held Jan. 26, 1966, the following officers were elected:

President	Alfred R. Harriman
Vice President	Mrs. Mildred Eaves
Secretary-Treasurer	Harry A. Vollborn
Directors	Mrs. Roberta Spotts
	Mrs. Doris Seabury
	Mrs. Jessie Potter
	Mrs. Emily Jones
	Mrs. Maud Lindemann
	Mrs. Emily Wogaman
Hold overs -	(Mrs. Lillian Robertson
Outgoing in 1967	(Mrs. Agnes Bradford

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

To Our Members and Interested Persons:

We are beginning a new year with hopes of continuing progress. The only way to judge our present condition is by comparison with other Historical Societies.

Viewing our past achievements, it seems that our Past President Mrs. Maud Lindemann has done an outstanding job. The Society owes much to her and her assistants for their hard work. For us to carry on equally well will take patience and courage.

The greatest handicap is lack of funds. We need many trivial things, such as a typewriter and a mimeograph machine, etc. Donations from our members who can afford it will be accepted. One of our greater outstanding needs is a building to display the historical artifacts.

Also, we need all the new members we can get. It is very simple to join - "just $2.00 a year" - no application to fill out.

I thank all of our members for the honor of being selected as the new President for the coming year.

Alfred R. Harriman

* * * * * * *

THE MADERA COUNTY HISTORIAN

Managing Editors - Madera County Historical Society Board of Directors

THE MADERA COUNTY HISTORIAN is published quarterly in January, April, July, and October by the Madera County Historical Society, P. O. Box 478, Madera, California, 93637. Subscription, 50¢ per copy, $2.00 per year, is included in membership in the Society. Please credit "The Madera County Historian" when reproducing any part.